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# Message Text

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R 181611Z FEB 77
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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9887
INFO AMEMBASSY BONN
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E.O.: 11652: GDS
TAGS: FR, PINT, PFOR
SUBJECT: TOUR D'HORIZON WITH FRENCH COMMUNIST PARTY (PCF) "FOREIGN MINISTER."

SUMMARY: EMBOFFS HELD TWO HOUR MEETING FEBRUARY L0TH WITH JEAN KANAPA, PCF'S "FOREIGN MINISTER." HIS MAIN POINTS:

-- THE PCF BELIEVES THAT A LEFT GOVERNMENT IN FRANCE SHOULD SEEK TO REDUCE INTERNATIONAL ARMS RACE AS ITS FIRST PRIORITY -- THIS IN NO WAY IMPLIES UNILATERAL DISARMAMENT;

-- ANOTHER HIGH PRIORITY IN FOREIGN POLICY WOULD BE ACTIVE PARTICIPATION IN THE GENEVA AND VIENNA TALKS TO "UNBLOCK THESE SITUATIONS"; A LEFT GOVERNMENT SHOULD ALSO MOVE TO ASSOCIATE ITSELF WITH THE US/SOVIET AGREEMENT (L97L) ON THE PREVENTION OF NUCLEAR WAR;

-- A LEFT GOVERNMENT WOULD BE RUN ON COLLEGIAL LINES, REGARDLESS OF WHICH PARTY HELD WHICH MINISTRIES, AND WOULD SEEK TO IMPLEMENT NOTHING MORE OR LESS THAN IS PREFIGURED IN THE COMMON PROGRAM. END SUMMARY.

1. BACKGROUND: CONTINUED ATTEMPTS OVER TWO YEARS AT MEETING WITH KANAPA HAD BEEN MARKED BY TOTAL DISINTEREST
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ON THE PCF'S PART. IT WAS ONLY RECENTLY THAT WE FIRST BEGAN TO GET SIGNALS THAT SUCH A MEETING WOULD NOT ONLY BE ACCEPTED, BUT THAT IT WAS BEING SOUGHT BY THE PCF. KANAPA RECEIVED EMBOFFS IN THE FORTRESS-LIKE PARTY HEADQUARTERS AND MADE NO REFERENCE AT ALL TO THE BACKGROUND OF PREVIOUS AVOIDANCE.

2. DEFENSE ISSUES: THROUGHOUT THE MEETING, KANAPA WAS AT PAINS TO STRESS THE PCF'S INTEREST IN REDUCING THE UPWARD CURVE OF THE ARMS RACE. KANAPA BEGAN WITH THE PREMISE THAT IN A WORLD "IN WHICH WE ALL HAVE TO BE REALISTS," IT WOULD BE IRRESPONSIBLE TO TALK ABOUT UNILATERAL DISARMAMENT. HE SKILLFULLY AVOIDED ANSWERING QUESTIONS ON HOW THE PCF WOULD RECONCILE "NO UNILATERAL DISARMAMENT" AND THE COMMON PROGRAM'S DECLARATION THAT ONE OF THE FIRST PRIORITIES OF A LEFT GOVERNMENT WOULD BE TO SCRAP THE FRENCH FORCE DE FRAPPE. ASKED ABOUT THE DISCREPANCY, KANAPA SMILINGLY REJOINED "THAT'S ONE OF THE SUBJECTS ON WHICH I'LL BE THE MOST RETICENT WITH

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YOU." HE DID, BY WAY OF JUSTIFICATION, DEFEND THIS AMBIGUITY BY REFERRING TO THE FACT THAT THE COMMON PROGRAM WAS SIGNED OVER 4 YEARS AGO, THUS IMPLYING THAT PCF THINKING HAD EVOLVED WITH THE CONTINUED DEVELOPMENT OF FRENCH NUCLEAR CAPABILITY.

3. COMMENT: LOUIS BAILLOT, PCF DEPUTY AND DEFENSE EXPERT, HAD BEEN REPORTED IN THE PRESS LAST YEAR AS MAKING STATEMENTS WHICH MOVED CLOSER TOWARD ACCEPTING FRANCE'S FORCE DE FRAPPE. KANAPA BACKED OFF FROM BAILLOT'S REPORTED POSITION, SAYING THAT BAILLOT HAD BEEN LARGELY MISQUOTED IN THE MEDIA AND THAT HE HAD ACTUALLY SAID LESS THAN WHAT WAS ATTRIBUTED TO HIM. KANAPA'S CAUTION INDICATES THAT THE PCF POSITION IS FAR FROM SETTLED ON

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THIS POINT, AND THAT THERE IS PROBABLY SERIOUS DEBATE
IF NOT DIVISION AMONG TOP PCF MEMBERS. END COMMENT.

4. NATO IS OBSOLETE: WHILE NOTING THAT BOTH THE COM-
MON PROGRAM AND THE PCF'S OWN ANALYSIS CALL FOR A GOVERN
MENT OF THE LEFT TO KEEP FRANCE IN THE ALLIANCE, KANAPA
EXPANDED SLIGHTLY ON HIS PREVIOUS DECLARATION (IN THE
JANUARY "FOREIGN AFFAIRS") THAT SHOULD THE ALLIES DESIRE
RENEGOTIATION OF THE ALLIANCE, A LEFT GOVERNMENT WOULD
WELCOME THE PROCESS. AFTER NOTING DECLARATIONS BY
SENATORS NUNN AND BARTLETT ON THE WEAKENED STATE OF THE
ALLIANCE, KANAPA CALLED SUCH THINKING "CYCLICAL AND
TIED TO THE ARRIVAL IN POWER OF EVERY NEW AMERICAN AD-
MINISTRATION." HE WENT ON TO SUGGEST THAT THE REAL WEAK
NESS OF NATO LIES IN CURRENT POLITICAL REALITIES, WHICH
ARE NO LONGER THOSE FOR WHICH THE ORGANIZATION WAS CREAT-
ED. CLAIMING THAT EUROPEANS NO LONGER BELIEVE IN THE
POSSIBILITY OF NUCLEAR WAR IN EUROPE AND THAT THEY ARE
NOW LESS LIKELY TO BELIEVE IN THE POSSIBILITY OF SOVIET
AGRESSION IN EUROPE, KANAPA SUGGESTED THAT THE NEARLY
THIRTY-YEAR-OLD TREATY IS OUTMODED. ASKED TO BE MORE
PRECISE ABOUT THE LEFT'S DESIDERATA SHOULD A RENEGOTIA-
TION IN FACT COME ABOUT, KANAPA WAS QUICK TO SAY THAT A
LEFT GOVERNMENT WOULD NOT SEEK SUCH A RE-
NEGOTIATION AND THAT HE WOULD, THEREFORE, MAKE NO PRE-
DICTIONS NOW AS TO WHAT FORMS IT MIGHT TAKE. THE PCF'S
FIRST CONCERNS, HE SAID, WOULD BE FRENCH INDEPENDENCE
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AND CORDIAL RELATIONS WITH ALL COUNTRIES. HE CALLED IT "ABERRANT" THAT THE FRG -- BUT NOT A FRANCE GOVERNED BY THE LEFT -- SHOULD HAVE A NON-AGGRESSION (OR FRIENDSHIP) TREATY WITH THE USSR. COMMENT: THIS IS, OF COURSE, A REFERENCE TO THE FRG/USSR BILATERAL TREATY OF 1970, WHICH IS STRICTLY SPEAKING, NEITHER A NON-AGGRESSION NOR A FRIENDSHIP TREATY, ALTHOUGH IT HAS ELEMENTS OF BOTH. END COMMENT.

5. FRENCH INDEPENDENCE: THE PCF'S STANDARD LINE IS BUILT AROUND THE CLAIM THAT ONLY A UNITED LEFT GOVERNMENT CAN RESTORE TRUE INDEPENDENCE TO FRENCH FOREIGN POLICY MAKING. INDEPENDENCE IS USUALLY PUT IN TERMS OF INITIATIVES THAT COULD BE TAKEN BY A LEFT GOVERNMENT TO "UNSTICK" (DEBLOQUER) PRESENT DEAD-LOCKS, EVEN THOUGH THESE INITIATIVES IMPLY INCREASED INVOLVEMENT BY THE GOF. THE CLASSIC ITEMS ADDUCED AS PROOF THAT SUCH IS THE PCF COMMITMENT WERE REITERATED BY KANAPA. THEY INCLUDE

-- EXPRESSIONS OF INTENT TO HAVE A LEFT GOVERNMENT SIGN THE NPT AND PARTICIPATE IN THE VIENNA MBFR AND GENEVA CCD TALKS.

-- THE STATEMENT THAT A LEFT GOVERNMENT WOULD BE ABLE TO TAKE MORE SERIOUS POLICY INITIATIVES FOR DETENTE, WHICH IS "SOMETHING MORE THAN THE PRIVATE CONTRACT BETWEEN THE TWO SUPER-GREAT POWERS."

-- THE RECOGNITION THAT THERE ARE OBVIOUS LIMITS ON WHAT ANY FRENCH GOVERNMENT CAN DO, GIVEN FRANCE'S SIZE AND POWER COMPARED TO THE GREAT POWERS. BUT, KANAPA SAID, "FRANCE IS NOT PORTUGAL, AND AFTER ALL THERE ARE ONLY A HANDFUL OF NUCLEAR POWERS IN THE WORLD TODAY."



TO THESE NEAR-OBLIGATORY ELEMENTS, KANAPA ADDED SOMETHING NEW: A LEFT GOVERNMENT IN FRANCE WOULD SEEK TO BECOME A SIGNATORY TO THE "VLADIVOSTOK AGREEMENT ON THE PREVENTION OF NUCLEAR WAR" (SIC). COMMENT: KANAPA WAS OBVIOUSLY REFERRING TO THE US/USSR AGREEMENT OF L97L ON THE PREVENTION OF NUCLEAR WAR. WHILE WE BELIEVE THAT HE WAS ADDRESSING HIMSELF TO WHAT HE ASSUMES TO BE HIS NEW

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WASHINGTON AUDIENCE, THE SUGGESTION IS NOT WITHOUT ITS ROOTS IN PREVIOUS PCF THINKING. HAVING STATED FOR MANY YEARS (SINCE 1968) THAT THE GOF IS TOO TIED TO FOLLOWING THE US AND SOVIET LEAD (WITH THE HEAVY ACCENT BEING ON THE FORMER), THE PARTY HAS OFTEN APPEARED TO BE SEARCHING FOR SOME GESTURE WHICH WOULD DEMONSTRATE ITS BELIEF THAT FRANCE AND THE OTHER EUROPEAN COUNTRIES CANNOT BE THE PASSIVE OBJECTS OF SUPER-POWER NEGOTIATIONS AIMED AT DETENTE. KANAPA'S SUGGESTION - IF TAKEN SERIOUSLY - IS JUST ANOTHER STEP IN THAT DEMONSTRATION. END COMMENT. ANOTHER STEP WHICH KANAPA MENTIONED, RELATED TO THE NPT SIGNATURE, WOULD BE STILL STRONGER FRENCH CURBS ON THE EXPORT OF ANY NUCLEAR TECHNOLOGY WHICH COULD BE USED FOR

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MILITARY PURPOSES. EXPORTS FOR PEACEFUL USES, HE SAID, WOULD CONTINUE, BUT THE WHOLE AREA OF NUCLEAR EXPORTS WOULD BE CLOSELY MONITORED BY THE LEFT.

6. A UNITED LEFT GOVERNMENT -- THE PCF PRESENCE: HOW WOULD THE PCF MAKE ITS PRESENCE FELT IN THE REALM OF FOREIGN AND DEFENSE POLICY (ASSUMING IT WOULD NOT HOLD ANY OF THESE KEY MINISTRIES)? KANAPA ANSWERED THAT A UNITED LEFT GOVERNMENT WOULD NECESSARILY, FUNCTION IN A COLLEGIAL MANNER WITH ALL ELEMENTS OF THAT GOVERNMENT TAKING PART IN THE DECISION MAKING. IMPORTANT DECISIONS ARE NOT TAKEN BY THE MINISTRIES ACTING ALONE, HE CONTINUED; THEY ARE TAKEN BY THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS. PCF MINISTERS WOULD THUS HAVE THEIR CHANCE TO DISCUSS AND DEBATE ALL ISSUES IN THE COUNCIL BEFORE ANY DECISION WAS REACHED. DRAWING AN HISTORIC PARALLEL TO PCF PARTICIPATION IN THE POST-WAR GOVERNMENTS OF FRANCE (1944-47), KANAPA SUGGESTED THAT THIS STYLE OF DECISION MAKING WAS INTRINSIC TO THE PROCESS OF BUILDING A COALITION ON THE LEFT. COMMENT: WHAT KANAPA SEEMS TO HAVE SAID THROUGH HIS SILENCE ON THE POINT IS THAT THE PCF ALREADY ACCEPTS THAT IT WILL NOT BE ABLE TO LAY CLAIM TO THE MINISTRIES MOST DIRECTLY CONCERNED WITH THE FORMULATION OF FOREIGN POLICY. IN RECENT DAYS, IN REACTION TO A NEWLY-PUBLISHED BOOK BY GASTON DEFFERRE, PS ELDER STATESMAN AND DEPUTY/MAYOR OF MARSEILLE, PRESS SPECULATION ON THE VARIOUS PORTFOLIOS WHICH MIGHT BE ATTRIBUTED TO THE
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THREE LEFT PARTIES HAS BEEN RAMPANT. KANAPA'S SILENCE IS THUS ALL THE MORE INTERESTING IN THAT IT COMES AT A TIME WHEN WE WOULD HAVE EXPECTED HIM - IF THE PARTY WERE STILL ENTERTAINING HOPES OF GETTING THE QUAI OR THE MOD- TO STAKE OUT HIS CLAIM IN HIS CONVERSATION WITH EMBOFFS. END COMMENT.

7. EUROCOMMUNISM - NOT A USEFUL TERM: KANAPA CONTINUES TO RIDE HIS FAVORITE HORSE ON EUROCOMMUNISM. WHAT WE ARE WATCHING IN EUROPE IS NOT, HE SAYS, A FUNCTION OF GEOGRAPHIC SIMILARITIES. THIS WOULD IMPLY THAT THE EASTERN COUNTRIES, HE GOES ON, ARE A PART OF WHAT IS LOOSELY CALLED EUROCOMMUNISM -- AND THAT IS SOMETHING WHICH THE PARTY CATEGORICALLY REJECTS. AGAIN REPEATING HIS PREVIOUS STATEMENTS (IN "FOREIGN AFFAIRS"), KANAPA SUGGESTED THAT COMMON STAGES OF INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT DEMAND COMMON RESPONSES ON THE PART OF NATIONAL COMMUN- IST PARTIES. THE JAPANESE COMMUNISTS WERE MENTIONED IN THIS CONTEXT -- ANOTHER REASON WHY THE TERM "EUROCOMMUN- ISM" DOES NOT FIT. IN ADDITION, HE WENT ON, THE VARIOUS PARTIES INVOLVED IN WHAT KANAPA CALLED "FACING HISTORICAL REALITIES" ARE GENERALLY INTENT ON TAKING A LINE WHICH WILL FREE THEM FROM THE VARIOUS IDEOLOGICAL DIFFICULTIES OF THE PAST IN ORDER TO "MORE EFFECTIVELY FACE THE POLI- TICAL AND ECONOMIC REALITIES OF THE PRESENT."

8. PCF/CPSU RELATIONS: EMBOFFS REQUESTED THAT KANAPA DISCUSS HIS IMPRESSION OF CURRENT SOVIET THINKING ON EURO-COMMUNISM, WHICH THE "FOREIGN MINISTER" AGREED WAS A USEFUL TERM FOR DESCRIBING LOOSELY THE PARTICULAR STAGE IN NATIONAL COMMUNISM WHICH HE WANTED TO DISCUSS. HOW DO THE SOVIETS, FOR INSTANCE PONOMAREV DURING HIS RECENT VISIT, VIEW THE EVOLUTION OF THE PCF? KANAPA ANSWERED. "THEY GET UPTIGHT ABOUT IT (ILS SE CONTRACTENT)." WHILE KANAPA RATHER DOUBTS THAT THE SOVIETS WOULD SEEK TO INTERFERE IN THE 1978 LEGISLATIVE ELECTIONS AS THEY DID
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IN THE 1974 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS, HE NOTES THAT IT IS ENTIRELY POSSIBLE. IF THE ELECTION WERE HELD TODAY, KANAPA SPECULATED, SOVIET AMBASSADOR TCHERVONENKO WOULD PROBABLY MAKE ANOTHER CALL ON GISCARD. "AT THAT POINT," KANAPA CONCLUDED, "WE WOULD EXPRESS OUR EXTREME DISPLEAS- URE IN THE LOUDEST POSSIBLE TERMS."

9. VISA QUESTIONS: AT THE VERY END OF THE MEETING,

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KANAPA RAISED THE QUESTION OF US VISA POLICY. EMBASSY OFFICERS REPLIED THAT WAIVERS UNDER CURRENT VISA LAW WERE ESTABLISHED ON A CASE BY CASE BASIS, THAT THE LAW HAS NOT CHANGED AND THAT THE NEW ADMINISTRATION WAS NO DOUBT STUDYING ITS IMPLEMENTATION WHERE DISCRETIONARY POWERS ARE GRANTED TO THE EXECUTIVE. KANAPA CONFINED HIMSELF TO NOTING THAT THE MATTER WAS NOT WITHOUT INTEREST GIVEN THE UPCOMING BELGRADE MEETINGS ON THE IMPLEMENTATIONS OF CSCE.

L0. COMMENT: THIS MEETING WITH KANAPA WAS PROBABLY MORE SIGNIFICANT FOR THE FACT THAT IT WAS HELD AT ALL THAN FOR ITS SUBSTANCE. BOTH HE AND PC FIRST SECRETARY

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MARCHAIS HAVE RECENTLY MADE STATEMENTS WHICH COULD BE READ AS GESTURES TOWARD THE NEW ADMINISTRATION, AND INDEED KANAPA REFERRED MORE THAN ONCE TO THE PRESIDENT'S PRESS CONFERENCE OF FEBRUARY 8TH, IN WHICH HE DISCUSSED SALT NEGOTIATIONS AT LENGTH. ON THE OTHER HAND, THE CONTENT OF KANAPA'S CONVERSATION WAS FAIRLY THIN - MORE AN ELABORATION OF PREVIOUS STATEMENTS AND WRITINGS THAN ANYTHING NEW. STILL THEREWEREA FEW NEW TWISTS, WHICH ARGUE FOR THE USEFULNESS OF CONTINUING THESE CONTACTS. FROM THE PCF'S POINT OF VIEW, SUCH MEETINGS ARE IN KEEPING WITH ITS PROFESSED POLICY OF OPENNESS TOWARD ALL COUNTRIES. FROM OUR POINT OF VIEW, THE POSSIBILITY THAT THIS CHANNEL -- OR OTHERS LIKE IT -- MAY BE THE SOURCE OF USEFUL INSIGHTS INTO PCF THINKING IS NOT TO BE IGNORED.

11. ALTHOUGH THE SUBSTANCE OF OUR MEETING WAS THIN AND STANDARD GRUEL, AT LEAST TWO NUANCES DESERVE NOTICE. KANAPA'S INSISTENCE ON THE COLLEGIAL ASPECTS OF A UNITED LEFT GOVERNMENT IS A CLEAR STATEMENT, AND ONE WE HAVE NOT PREVIOUSLY HEARD, THAT THE PCF DOES NOT INTEND TO LET THE PS RUN THOSE MINISTRIES WHICH IT KEEPS FOR ITSELF. THIS THOUGHT IMPACTS IN TURN ON AN ENTIRE RANGE OF POLITICAL SCENARIOS AND MAY EXPLAIN WHY, IN THESE VERY EARLY STAGES OF POSITIONING AND PRE-NEGOTIATIONS FOR LEGISLATIVE DISTRICTS, THE PCF IS PROVING TO BE SOMEWHAT MORE ACCOMODATING TO THE PS THAN HAD PREVIOUSLY BEEN EXPECTED. WHILE SOME PS OBSERVERS HAVE INDEED SUGGESTED THAT THIS
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IS THE PRESENT PCF ATTITUDE, NONE HAS YET CITED THE THOUGHT THAT "COLLEGIALITY" IS THE REASON FOR IT. A SECOND CURIOSITY IN KANAPA'S LINE IS THE CLEAR RELUCTANCE -- WHICH WE READ AS THE RESULT OF HAVING NO APPROVED PARTY POSITION ON WHICH TO FALL BACK -- TO DISCUSS THE OBVIOUS CONTRADICTIONS BETWEEN WHAT PCF SPOKESMEN ARE ACTUALLY SAYING (PARIS 37459) AND WHAT THE COMMON PROGRAM MIGHT LEAD THEM TO SAY. THIS GAP IN OUR CONVERSATION, WHILE PROBABLY NOT SIGNIFYING MAJOR CHANGE OVER THE LONG TERM, AT LEAST SUGGESTS THAT THE PCF DOES NOT SEEK TO DISOWN ITS AVANT-GARDE AND IS WILLING TO CONTINUE TO LET OTHERS BELIEVE (AS BEFITS A PARTY SEEKING TO CHANGE ITS IMAGE) THAT THE COMMUNISTS HAVE BECOME MORE RESPONSIVE TO FRENCH NATIONAL INTERESTS THAN TO INTERNATIONAL IDEOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS.
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